

Library Consortia Initiatives in India: A Boon for Scholarly Communication

Dr. K.G Jayarama Naik¹ Radhakrishna, B.R²

¹Associate Professor, Dept. of Library and Information Science, Bangalore University, Bangalore,
E-mail: kgjmaik.1964@gmail.com

²Librarian, University College of Physical Education, Bangalore University, Jnanbharathi, Bangalore,
Research Scholar, Periyar University, Salem. E-mail: raki541@gmail.com

Abstract

A Consortium could be described as a group of organizations who come together to fulfill a combined objective that usefully requires co-operation and sharing of resources. And need to have a clear mutual goal in order to ensure their success. A library Consortium formation can be local, regional, state, national and inter institutional level. In this paper authors presents various library consortia initiative in India to improve the Indian scholarship and scholarly communication and also presents an overview of UGC-Infonet, INDEST and other consortia initiatives.

Keywords: Library consortia, Scholarly communication, UGC Infonet, Other library consortia.

INTRODUCTION

Libraries duty is to identify selection of information, its organization of management, storage, retrieval and dissemination to right users at the right time at right place and in right format. Due to the advent of Internet and telecommunications technologies and information explosion, the methods of servicing has changed. Electronic resources become the most powerful tools in recent development in information technology. It has established as a medium of communication as it connects across globe by removing geographical boundaries, time saving and simpler. But the rise in the cost of e-journals, increase in the number of e-journals, scarcity of funds for libraries, unable to meet the needs of every user leads to library cooperation's like Inter library loan, resource sharing and library consortia.

LIBRARY CONSORTIUM

The consortium is needed for libraries because of information explosion, diversity of user needs, financial crunch and impossibility of self sufficiency. Generally, libraries come together to form a consortium so that they bargain with the journal producers as a united body for better (lower) prices, for greater access (in terms of number of journals), for archival access (access to past issues), for perpetual access (access even after discontinuation of subscription) etc. Due to insufficient funds, libraries have been forced to cut on subscriptions for important journals while it is difficult to manage the journals budget, every year. The explosion of information and inadequate library funds urged the libraries to adopt new philosophies and technologies for collection development and reduce the costs information. Library Consortium is an Association of a group of libraries to achieve mutually the common objective.

Advantage of Consortia-based subscription to electronic resources are providing access to wider number of electronic resources at substantially lower cost, Optimum utilization of funds, Facilities to build up digital libraries, Helpful to provide better library services like CAS and SDI, Cost Sharing for Technical and training support, Electronic Journals demand neither library space nor shelving costs nor can they be stolen from the library. The consortium have been offered better terms of licenses for use,

archival access and preservation of subscribed electronic resources, which would not have been possible for any single institution and its services are made available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Apart from all this, it has disadvantages like absence of a printed copy of Journals, requires training of staffs in handling electronic documents etc. A consortium requires high initial investments for licenses and Information and Communication Technology. It has other problems like Copyright issues, unreliable telecommunication links and insufficient bandwidth, Lack of archiving and back files availability, Internet access Id necessity and users not accepting e-journals as par with the printed Journals etc.

DIFFERENT FORMS OF LIBRARY CONSORTIUM

Different forms of library consortium are evolved in India depending upon participants, affiliation and funding sources.

- ❖ **Open Consortia:** This type of consortia is very flexible and it is the wish of members of consortia to join and leave any time they please. INDEST Consortium is an example to this.
- ❖ **Closed Group Consortia:** It is within defined group. This kind of consortia emerges either by affiliation or by collaboration among them like CSIR, DAE, IIM Consortium. And the formation and operation of the consortia guidelines and its administration are fairly simple and easy.
- ❖ **Centrally Funded Model:** In this model, consortium will solely depend on the parent body. A few examples are INFONET by UGC, ICMR, CSIR by DSIR.
- ❖ **Shared-Budget Model:** In this model the participating libraries take the lead and form the consortium. IIM and FORSA are examples of this model.
- ❖ **Publisher Initiatives:** The Emerald Full-Text Library published by the Emerald Publishing Group (formerly MCB University Press) is recent example. Here, the consortium members will get deep discount price to the participating libraries.
- ❖ **National Consortium:** The end of this model is, national level licensing of products. And in this regard is INDEST-AICTE, UGC-INFONET.

E-JOURNALS CONSORTIUM IN INDIA: ROLE OF MHRD/UGC IN LIBRARY CONSORTIA

In India, library consortium has improved with the setting up of few government funded library consortia. Prior to setting up of these consortia, the access to e-journals was restricted to few institutions like IISc, IITs, IIMs and few central universities.

The role of MHRD: The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) under its Department of Higher Education is engaged in bringing world class opportunities of higher education and research to the country so that Indian students are not finding lacking when facing an international platform. The "Indian National Digital Library in Engineering Sciences and Technology (INDEST) Consortium" was set up in 2003 by it to fulfill its objectives. The IIT Delhi has been designated as the Consortium Headquarters. It was renamed as INDEST-AICTE Consortium in December 2005 with the AICTE playing a pivotal role in enrolling its approved engineering colleges and institutions as members. The Consortium enrolls engineering and technological institutions as its members and subscribe to electronic resources for them at discounted rates of subscription and favourable terms and conditions. The Ministry provides funds required for subscription to electronic resources for 62 centrally-funded Government institutions including IITs, IISc Bangalore, NITs, ISM, IIITs, IIMs, NITTTR's and few other institutions that are considered as

core members of the Consortium. The INDEST-AICTE Consortium is the most ambitious initiative taken so far in the country. It is the biggest Consortium in terms of number of member institutions in Asia. The Consortium subscribes to over 12,000 electronic journals from a number of publishers and aggregators. The consortium website at <http://paniit.iitd.ac.in/indest> hosts searchable databases of journals and member institutions to locate journals subscribed by the Consortium, their URLs and details of member institutions.

Joint project of INDEST-AICTE Consortium & UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium, the programme of subscription of e-resources through Centrally Sponsored Scheme of National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (NME-ICT) of Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) is being jointly executed by the INDEST-AICTE Consortium, IIT Delhi and UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium, INFLIBNET Centre (NME-ICT/N-LIST) and provide for : i) Cross subscription to e-resources subscribed by the two Consortia, i.e. subscription to INDEST-AICTE Consortium resources for universities and UGC-INFONET resources for technical institutions, and ii) Access to selected e-resources to colleges.

The another programme funded by the MHRD to extend access to selected e-resources to colleges covered under Section 2F/12B of UGC Act as well as Non-aided colleges is "National Library and Information services Infrastructure for Scholarly Content" (N-List).

More than 6,000 colleges covered under Section 2F/12B of UGC Act, non aided colleges (except Agriculture, Engineering, Medical, Pharmacy and Nursing) are eligible to register with N-LIST programme. These colleges will get access to selected electronic resources including e-journals and e-books. However, colleges that are not covered under 2F/12B Act of UGC can join Associate Membership Programme that is specifically being designed for colleges. N-LIST Programme offers the best possible discounted prices negotiated between N-LIST and Publishers. It will enable access to scholarly information in e-format at highly discounted rate. It will facilitate desk top access to high-quality e-resources to your students and researchers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year.

UGC INFONET E-JOURNALS CONSORTIUM

The UGC INFONET Digital Library Consortium was launched in 2004, as a nationwide programme to facilitate access to e-resources to university libraries in India. The thoughts of building UGC INFONET Digital Library Consortium is based on the fact that no single library can collect all the information published in the world, and no single library can serve all the needs required by the users. The consortium-based subscription offers access to high quality peer reviewed journals, published by society, commercial and institute publishers to its members. The Consortium provides current as well as archival access to more than 7500+ core and peer-reviewed journals and 10 bibliographic databases from 26 publishers and aggregators in different disciplines. The programme has been implemented in phased manner. In the first phase that began in 2004, access to e-resources was provided to 50 universities who had Internet connectivity under the UGC-Infonet Connectivity programme of the UGC. In the second phase, 50 more universities were added to the programme in the year 2005. So far 209 Universities including 14 National Law schools and central universities that come under the purview of UGC have been provided differential access to subscribed e-resources. These e-resources covers almost all subject disciplines including arts, humanities, social sciences, physical sciences, chemical Sciences, life sciences, computer sciences, mathematics and statistics, etc. The programme is wholly funded by the UGC and executed by the INFLIBNET (Information and Library Network) Centre, Gandhinagar.

The Consortium has also launched its "Associate Membership Programme" wherein private universities and other research organizations are welcomed to join the Consortium for selected e-resources.

The benefit of subscription to e-resources would also be extended to the colleges, to begin with the College for Potential with Excellence (CPE) and autonomous colleges.

OTHER LIBRARY CONSORTIA'S IN INDIA

- **CSIR E-Journal Consortium:** The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) constitute of 40 research laboratories in India. The CSIR E-journals Consortium was the first major and formal consortium at national level. The Consortium started with access to Science Direct (Elsevier Science) for all of its 40 laboratories in 2001. The extent of the CSIR E-Journals Consortium was restricted to only one publisher (Science Direct) till 2005 because of lack of commitment to funds and resources by the CSIR management and problems in getting commitment for retaining print subscription by participating institutions. After delay of couple of years, the CSIR E-journals Consortium, in the year 2005, has entered into agreement with 11 publishers to access about 3316 international journals across all its the laboratories / institutions. Thus, the expansion of information base of CSIR laboratories / institutions has increased from 20 -200 print journals to 3,316 e-journals for its every user. The Consortium is wholly funded by the CSIR and is monitored by NISCAIR, a CSIR institution situated in Delhi. In 2009 the Consortium failed to reach License agreement with Science Direct forcing the Institutions to go in for their own individual subscriptions.
- **Forum for Resource Sharing in Astronomy (FORSA):** At present, there are eleven institutional members. The Consortium facilitates e-access to Journals and Books and promotes Resource Sharing and ILL among Astronomy related Institutions.
- **Health Science Library and Information Network (HELINET):** HELINET is operated by the Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences, Karnataka. The consortium was started with a vision to improve the quality of education and research in the Health Science colleges/institutions in Karnataka state through enhanced access to high quality medical information. The major benefit of this consortium is providing access to more than 600 core international e-journals.
- **Consortium for e-Resources in Agriculture (CeRA):** A Consortium on e-Resources in Agriculture (CeRA) has been established in 123 agricultural / animal science universities / deemed universities / research institutes of the Indian Council of Agriculture (ICAR). CeRA provides access to 1500 online journals, books and data base available in Veterinary, Animal, Fisheries and Agricultural Sciences.
- **DRDO consortium,** its members are DRDO Labs. It's funding agency is DESIDOC.
- **DeLCON Consortium,** services 14 DBT Institutions including ICGB, New Delhi and 18 North Eastern Region Institutions is funded by Department of Biotechnology (DBT).

CONCLUSION

The improvement in the quality standard of the research in Universities and research institutions in India at global level are possible by providing global access of literature. Cost of the electronic publishing is cheaper than the print version; access of the same saves time very much. All these leads e-journals to become largest and fastest growing collections of libraries. But the Universities libraries are finding it difficult to maintain the subscription for core journals due to increasing subscription cost. The University Grants Commission has taken the initiative to address the issue of serials crisis in university libraries and launched a programme which is popularly known as UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium. INFLIBNET Centre is responsible for implementing this nationwide programme, which has benefited millions of users (teachers, research scholars and students) across the country.

REFERENCES

1. International Coalition of Library Consortia (ICOLC) from <http://www.icolc.org> (accessed on January 23,2015).
2. Wikipedia<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Library_consortium>(accessed on January 23,2015).
3. Dr. Manoj Kumar Sinha; Anupam Choudhary (2014), "Usage of e-resources by the scientific community library users of Assam university, Silchar: A comparative study, Asia Pacific Journal of Research, 1(16).pp133-153.
4. Ahmad, Naved; Basha, Imtiaz; and Fatima, Nishat, (2012) "Use of UGC-Infonet Consortia by the Research Scholars at University of Delhi: A Survey", Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal). Paper 713.
5. Thanuskodi, S. (2012): Awareness and Usage of UGC-Infonet Digital Library Consortium among Faculty Members of State Universities in Tamil Nadu: A Survey, International Journal of Information Science, 2(3): 13-18 DOI: 10.5923/j.ijis.20120203.02